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Concerning 04-151,

I recently found out you are considering the possible availability of additional frequencies from 3650-3700 GHz for unlicensed usage by the public, with registration allowing stations to broadcast at up to 25 watts. As a rural internet provider, may I please implore you to allow this. I can hardly imagine anything that would be more effective at encouraging the propagation of inexpensive reliable internet connectivity to rural citizens.

We provide wireless connectivity in a rural area. The area is in fact so rural that until recently it was the largest geographic area for any Congressional district east of the Mississippi. And this is while it is along one major Interstate highway, and about 20 miles from an interchange of two other Interstate highways. It is also two hours drive from Indianapolis and St. Louis, and three hours from Chicago.

My company was the first internet service provider in this area, established in 1996, bringing dial up access to a population that census numbers tell us is about 6,000 households, and 15,000 people, all spread out over a 400 square mile area.

In 1999 we started experimenting with wireless connectivity for our customers. We found that many businesses in the area over the next few years were required to get high-speed connectivity in order to maintain their businesses.

Many businesses, such as insurance companies, car dealerships, and farm implement dealerships previously maintained a connection to the companies of which they were a franchise via 56k dedicated phone lines, or two way satellite communications. Those parent companies informed these franchise outlets that they would no longer subsidize their connectivity, as they were eliminating that service for cost reasons, and these franchises would be required to get access to the parent corporation via the internet.

If we hadn't been experimenting with wireless over unregulated frequencies (2.4 GHz, specifically), then a lot of these businesses would have been faced with some hard decisions. Some of these employers were looking at having to move their offices to continue their existing relationships with the companies they affiliated with.

The employees of these companies would have added travel to their jobs, the customers would have added travel to do business, and the businesses would have added expense, some of which was expected to be substantial.

But instead they got wireless connectivity from us.

Since then city governments have connected through us, grain elevators have connected through us to track markets in real time, farmers have connected to track those same markets, doctors have followed the latest research databases, lawyers have gained access to current rulings and legal databases, and parents that lived in the middle of nowhere felt that they could bring the outside world, as best they could, to their children's (as you undoubtedly have experienced yourselves) insatiably curious intellect.

That last one is a really big deal. A lot of parents in rural areas feel that they are providing a wonderful upbringing to their children, with a lifestyle and a sense of community not available in larger towns, but they often fear that they are depriving their children of opportunity and experiences that are just not available in a small town. As a result you'll often see rural families dragging their children to museums in larger cities every summer. They still do that, but now they can preview where they are going, pick sections they are really interested in, buy tickets online, and be prepared to take advantage of these resources when they get there.

As residents of Washington D.C., you are familiar with the Smithsonian. Heck, I am real familiar with the Smithsonian. And you know how big an advantage it can be when you know what you are looking for, where it is, and how to get to it.

Imagine a farmer and his wife, planning a vacation in D.C. They schedule two days for the Smithsonian (yeah, I know, but neither the farmer nor his wife has been there since their parents took them in their teens, and they forgot how big it is, and besides, they have memorials to see, too). They plan to take their two daughters to Air and Space, History, and Natural History.

But Jenny, the 11 year old watches a video off the Smithsonian website, and now wants to see the huge Calder mobile at the modern art museum, so now they have to trudge over there. Jenny isn't actually very impressed by the museum, but 8 year old Cindy loves it, and asks if there are more art museums. Mom looks at the print out, sees the art museum next door, so they cut through on their way to another museum (it's summer in DC, and the museum is air conditioned). Along the way Cindy and her Dad (though he denies it) end up falling in love with the Dutch masters, together.

Well, Cindy is lucky. One, her parents paid for their connection. Two, they live within clean line of sight of the grain elevator we shoot connectivity off of.

If they had a stand of trees in the wrong spot, we can't help them. Doesn't matter what we want to do, trees act like large bodies of water, and our signals are limited to one watt. The proposal that was passed allows us to install 25 watt transmitters, and trees don't matter at that point.

And when Cindy gets home, she writes e-mail to her Grandma, on her mamma's side, who lives in another rural community. And her Grandma writes to Cindy about how her Dad took her to the zoo in Chicago one summer, and she's always been fascinated with bears ever since.

More frequencies and more wattage means more connectivity for these people. And that is important to them, and it's also important to us, because Jenny, while bored silly at the art museum, really was interested in Air and Space, and just joined the model rocketry club at her school.

So. Please give us more frequencies and more power, and maybe that business thinking of locating in this county will come here because we can provide reliable connectivity, maybe the existing businesses will be able to expand their business to new markets via the internet, maybe people will feel they are attached to the great big world around them while doing the work that must be done in lonely places, and maybe, just maybe this entire county's greatest dream can come true, and their children won't be forced to move away to make enough of a living to have a family of their own.

Thank you for considering our concerns and hopes.

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